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PTQ6562

RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CG-00	CIAE-00
	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	FMC-01	VC-00
	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00
	CAC-00	VCE-00	MED-07	AC-01	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OES-00
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	CAEX-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/022W				

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O 241723Z DEC 02  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9305  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
NSC WASHDC  
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CARACAS 004196

STATE ALSO FOR DS/IP/WHA, S/S-O/DS, AND DS/DSS/ITA  
NSC FOR LLORENS

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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
STAE PLEASE PASS TO USAID FOR DCHA/OTI - RON ULLRICH AND  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2012  
TAGS: ECON, EWWT, PGOV, ASEC, CASC, VE  
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA STRIKE: THE SHIPPING STAND-OFF AFTER  
PILIN LEON

REF: CARACAS 4190

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM FREDERICK B. COOK: REASON 1.5(B), (D).

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SUMMARY

1. (C) ON DECEMBER 23, EMBOFFS MET WITH A GROUP FROM THE VENEZUELAN MERCHANT MARINE, INCLUDING [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] THE GROUP DISCUSSED CONCERNS REGARDING THE GOV'S STRATEGY FOR BREAKING THE SHIPPING STRIKE, ALLEGING "TORTURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS." THEY SAID THE GOV WAS PAYING VERY HIGH PREMIUMS -- UP TO FIVE TIMES THE NORMAL RATE -- TO VESSELS AND TUGBOAT OPERATORS THAT DISREGARD THE STRIKE. ALTHOUGH THE GOV MANAGED TO BRING THE TANKER PILIN LEON, WHICH HAD BECOME A SYMBOL OF THE STRIKE, INTO PORT AND OFF-LOAD ITS CARGO, THE MERCHANT MARINE REMAINED FIRM IN ITS POSITION: "NOT ONE SINGLE DROP OF OIL WILL LEAVE THIS COUNTRY WHILE CHAVEZ REMAINS IN POWER." DESPITE THIS ASSERTION, 9 VESSELS HAD DEPARTED VENEZUELA AS OF DECEMBER 23 LOADED WITH

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CRUDE AND OTHER PRODUCTS, ADMITTEDLY FAR BELOW NORMAL NUMBERS. A LIST OF TANKERS THAT HAVE SAILED AND THOSE IN AND AROUND VENEZUELAN PORTS FOLLOWS IN PARAS 7-9. END SUMMARY.

IDENTIFYING THE ENEMY

2. (C) THE MERCHANT MARINERS DELIVERED TO EMBOFFS A COPY OF A [REDACTED] OPERATIONS ORDER, ALLEGEDLY ORIGINATING FROM "TASK FORCE 21" IN PUNTO FIJO. THE MISSION OUTLINED IN THE DOCUMENT WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOV'S PUBLIC DISCOURSE, THAT IS: "TO UNDERTAKE THE NECESSARY ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT MARITIME TERMINALS AND SHIPS DEDICATED TO THE TRANSPORT OF HYDROCARBONS... FULFILL THEIR FUNCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF NORMALITY IN COMMERCIAL MARITIME ACTIVITY IN THE COUNTRY." FOR THE MERCHANT MARINE, THE ALARMING ASPECT OF THE OPERATIONS ORDER WAS THE FACT THAT "GROUPS ACTING AGAINST THE MISSION OF THE TASK FORCE" WERE LABELED "ENEMY FORCES."

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PRISONERS OF WAR

3. (C) CALLING HIS COLLEAGUES "PRISONERS OF WAR," [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] DESCRIBED A SITUATION IN WHICH THOSE CREW MEMBERS WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND IMPRISONED WERE BEING DENIED MEDICAL ATTENTION AND LEGAL COUNSEL. (NOTE: CREW MEMBERS OF

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THE FOLLOWING VESSELS HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY: CAURA,  
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AMBROSIA, PILIN LEON, AND THE PILIN LEON CREWMEMBERS WERE  
RELEASED SHORTLY AFTER BEING ARRESTED. END NOTE.)  
ADDITIONALLY, HE ASSERTED THAT THE MILITARY HAS PREVENTED THE  
DELIVERY OF FOOD AND WATER TO CREWS REMAINING ON SHIPS  
ANCHORED IN LAKE MARACAIBO AND PUERTO LA CRUZ AS PART OF AN  
EFFORT TO PRESSURE THE MERCHANT MARINE TO ABANDON THE STRIKE.  
IN AT LEAST ONE INSTANCE, THE GOV HAS ALSO DENIED THE  
VENEZUELAN RED CROSS ACCESS TO THE CREWS.

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GOV PAYING WAR PREMIUMS  
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4. (C) MERCHANT MARINE [REDACTED] B1  
MENTIONED THAT THE GOV IS CURRENTLY PAYING UP TO FIVE TIMES  
THE NORMAL RATE FOR TANKERS TO SAIL LOADED WITH PDVSA OIL.  
NOTING THAT THE AVERAGE FEE FOR A VOYAGE FROM VENEZUELA TO  
THE U.S. IS USD 400,000, [REDACTED] SAID THAT RECENTLY B1  
DEPARTED VESSELS RECEIVED UPWARDS OF USD 2 MILLION TO  
UNDERTAKE THE VOYAGE. SIMILARLY, THE FEW TUGBOAT OPERATORS  
WILLING TO IGNORE THE STRIKE WERE RECEIVING TRIPLE THEIR  
NORMAL FEES. (NOTE: IF TRUE, THIS WOULD HELP EXPLAIN THE  
RUMORS OF LARGE MOVEMENTS IN PDVSA'S ACCOUNTS, AS WELL AS  
PDVSA'S RUMORED DECEMBER 20 WITHDRAWAL OF USD 500 MILLION  
FROM VENEZUELA'S MACROECONOMIC STABILIZATION FUND (FIEM).  
END NOTE.) [REDACTED] ALSO ASSERTED THAT STATE-OWNED STEEL B1

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ACTION WHA-00

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	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	FMC-01	VC-00
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	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/022W				

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O 241723Z DEC 02  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9306  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
NSC WASHDC  
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 CARACAS 004196

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NSC FOR LLORENS

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STAE PLEASE PASS TO USAID FOR DCHA/OTI - RON ULLRICH AND  
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PILIN LEON

AND ALUMINUM PRODUCER CVG IS PAYING TWO TRINIDADIAN TUGBOATS  
USD 15 MILLION A DAY TO OPERATE IN THE ORINOCO RIVER.

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"NOT ONE DROP OF OIL...."  
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5. (C) ECONOFF ASKED THE MERCHANT MARINE REPRESENTATIVES WHAT  
STEPS THEY INTENDED TO TAKE FOLLOWING THE GOV'S SUCCESS IN  
BRINGING THE TANKER PILIN LEON INTO PORT. [REDACTED]  
EXPRESSED GENUINE CONCERN REGARDING THE SAFETY OF THE SAILORS  
IN THE FACE OF GOV PRESSURE HE DESCRIBED AS TORTURE AND  
DEPRIVATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HE SAID REPEATEDLY, HOWEVER  
THAT THE MERCHANT MARINE WOULD NOT ABANDON THE STRIKE, SAYING  
"NOT ONE DROP OF OIL WILL LEAVE VENEZUELA AS LONG AS CHAVEZ  
CONTINUES TO BE PRESIDENT."

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RISKS TAKEN BY THE GOV  
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6. (C) [REDACTED] POINTED TO THE RISKS BEING TAKEN BY  
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THE GOV TO GET THE MERCHANT FLEET MOVING. HE ASSERTED THAT THE CAPTAIN WHO DOCKED THE PILIN LEON HAD BEEN FIRED BY PDVSA FOR ALCOHOLISM. HE ALSO POINTED TO THE CASE OF THE BORA, A HONG KONG-FLAGGED NATURAL GAS CARRIER CHARTERED TO PDVSA, WHICH LEFT FOR CURACAO WHEN IT WAS UNABLE TO LOAD. [REDACTED] SUPPORTED REPORTS THAT VENEZUELAN NAVAL VESSELS PURSUED THE BORA AND COMPELLED IT TO RETURN TO VENEZUELAN WATERS.

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VESSELS BELIEVED DEPARTED  
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7. (U) THE FOLLOWING VESSELS, BY OUR COUNT, HAVE LEFT VENEZUELAN PORTS SINCE THE STRIKE BEGAN:

- MARSHALL CHUYKOV, DEPARTED LA SALINAS WITH 350,000 BARRELS OF CRUDE, BUT IS CURRENTLY BELIEVED TO BE LYING OFF THE PARAGUANA REFINERY COMPLEX.
- JOSEFA CAMEJO, DEPARTED FOR US ON 12 DECEMBER WITH 450,000 BARRELS OF CRUDE.
- DOWNHILL, REPORTEDLY LEFT PUERTO LA CRUZ ON 17 DECEMBER FOR AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION.
- NORGAS DISCOVERER, DEPARTED JOSE TERMINAL O/A 18 DECEMBER WITH 52,000 BARRELS OF PROPANE, DESTINATION ECUADOR.
- IVER LIBRA, IS RUMORED TO HAVE DEPARTED FOR THE U.S O/A 18 DECEMBER WITH 24,000 TONS OF METHANE.
- IVER PROSPERITY, A CHEMICAL TANKER, IS RUMORED TO HAVE DEPARTED JOSE TERMINAL O/A 21 DECEMBER.
- MAERSK HOLYHEAD, DELIVERING 146,000 BARRELS OF PROPANE FROM JOSE TO EL TABLAZO IN LAKE MARACAIBO.
- MAERSK SCOTLAND, BELIEVED TO HAVE SAILED EMPTY.
- KIOWA SPIRIT, DEPARTED FOR THE U.S. WITH A LOAD OF CRUDE

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O/A 17 DECEMBER.

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PDVSA'S FLEET  
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8. (U) THE FOLLOWING VESSELS OF THE PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA SHIPPING FLEET ARE ACCOUNTED FOR:

- PILIN LEON, A TANKER SHIPPING REFINED PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, WAS DRIVEN TO THE BAJO GRANDE OIL TERMINAL ON DECEMBER 21, AND ITS CARGO OF LEADED GASOLINE AND DIESEL FUEL HAS BEEN OFF-LOADED.
- SUSANA DUIJM, A TANKER CARRYING AVIATION FUEL AND UNLEADED

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GASOLINE, IS ANCHORED OFF THE PORT OF LA GUAIRA NEAR CARACAS.

THE CREW CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO BRING THE VESSEL INTO PORT.

-- MARITZA SAYALERO, A TANKER FOR REFINED PRODUCTS, REMAINS ANCHORED OFF PARAGUANA. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT THE GOV PLANS TO REPLACE THE CREW SOON AND MOVE THE SHIP INTO PORT.

-- BARBARA PALACIOS, A TANKER CARRYING GASOIL AND OTHER PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, WAS TAKEN BY THE NATIONAL GUARD AND BROUGHT INTO DOCK AT GUARAGUAO (PUERTO LA CRUZ) ON DECEMBER 22. THE CREW CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO OFF-LOAD THE CARGO.

-- MORUY, A TANKER FOR REFINED PRODUCTS WHICH IS CURRENTLY EMPTY, REMAINS ANCHORED IN LAKE MARACAIBO.

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INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CG-00	CIAE-00
	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00
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	CAC-00	VCE-00	MED-07	AC-01	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OES-00
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	CAEX-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/022W				

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O 241723Z DEC 02

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9307

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY QUITO

USCINCSO MIAMI FL

NSC WASHDC

USINT HAVANA

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-- YAVIRE, A TANKER SHIPPING NATURAL GAS, HAS BEEN BOARDED BY  
THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY, BUT REMAINS ANCHORED AT JOSE, AND  
THE CREW OF THE VESSEL CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO MOVE IT.

-- PARAMACAY, ALSO A TANKER SHIPPING NATURAL GAS, WAS BOARDED  
BY THE GOV ON DECEMBER 12. IT IS CURRENTLY AT PUERTO CORDON.

-- MORICHAL, A CRUDE OIL TANKER WHICH IS CURRENTLY EMPTY,  
REMAINS ANCHORED IN LAKE MARACAIBO.

-- AMBROSIO, A TANKER CARRYING CRUDE OIL, IS ANCHORED AT  
PARAGUANA, AND THE GOV HAS DETAINED SEVERAL MEMBERS OF ITS  
CREW.

-- NEREO, A CRUDE OIL TANKER, IS REPORTED TO BE DOCKED AT  
GUARAGUAO (PUERTO LA CRUZ), WHERE IT WILL TAKE ON 575,000  
BARRELS OF CRUDE DESTINED FOR CORPUS CRISTI.

-- TESEO, ANOTHER CRUDE OIL TANKER, IS ALSO REPORTED TO BE  
DOCKED AT GUARAGUAO (PUERTO LA CRUZ), AND ACCORDING TO PRESS  
REPORTS WILL TAKE ITS CARGO TO THE US, AS WELL.

-- PARIA, A CRUDE OIL TANKER, IS ANCHORED AT POZUELOS. ITS  
ULTIMATE DESTINATION IS REPORTED TO BE CUBA.

-- GUANOCO, AN ASPHALT CARRIER, IS ALSO ANCHORED AT POZUELOS.

-- EOS, A CRUDE OIL TANKER, IS MOORED AT THE TAEJ FUELING  
PLATFORM NEAR PUERTO LA CRUZ.

-- CAURA, A VESSEL CARRYING LUBRICANTS, IS ANCHORED AT  
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PARAGUANA

-- INCIARTE, AN ASPHALT CARRIER, IS ANCHORED AT AMUAY.

-----  
OTHER TANKERS AT OR NEAR JOSE TERMINAL  
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9. (U) THE FOLLOWING CRUDE OIL TANKERS ARE ANCHORED OFF JOSE  
TERMINAL, NEAR PUERTO LA CRUZ:

-- GENMAR BOSS, SCHEDULED TO LOAD 600,000 BARRELS OF CRUDE  
BOUND FOR THE U.S.

-- VERENICE, SCHEDULED TO LOAD 520,000 BARRELS OF CRUDE.

-- EAGLE AUGUSTA.

-- KIM JACOB.

-- SAFWA.

-- SINGAPORE SPIRIT.

-- HAMANE SPIRIT.

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-- OLYMPIA  
-- PRINCESS MARISOL  
-- NORDOCEAN  
-- GENMAR AJAX

-- LA FORCE, A NATURAL GAS CARRIER, IS ALSO ANCHORED OFF JOSE  
TERMINAL, AS WELL AS  
-- VICTORIA B, A FUEL OIL TANKER, AND  
-- ANN B (TYPE OF VESSEL UNSPECIFIED).

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COMMENT  
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10. (C) MILITARY OPERATIONS ORDERS AND WARTIME HYPERBOLE SEEM  
TO ACCURATELY CAPTURE THE PERCEPTION OF BOTH SIDES IN THE OIL  
AND SHIPPING STRIKE. THE GOV AND THE STRIKERS BOTH VIEW THIS  
AS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL. THE MERCHANT MARINERS WITH WHOM  
WE SPOKE APPEAR TO VIEW THE GOV'S SUCCESS IN DOCKING THE  
TANKER PILIN LEON ON DECEMBER 21 AS JUST A TACTICAL SETBACK,  
ONE THAT WILL NOT DETER THEM FROM THEIR LONG-TERM GOAL OF  
REGIME CHANGE IN VENEZUELA.  
SHAPIRO

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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